

Manjusri's keen sword cuts off the various follies
 The Mother of Realization's¹ sanskrit letters are the teacher
 of the Chariot Driver;²
 Dhih and mam-- these mantras are the bijas,
 the dharani which hold as a treasure storehouse the various teachings.

The limitless sangsara-- how can it be cut off?
 Only dhyana and prajna (can do it).
 The revered one's samadhi didn't allow others the benevolence³
 I now praise and explain it; bestow your compassion.

Now, the real thusness is not distant. As it is in the citta, it is therefore close; the real thusness is not outside. Throwing away the body, where could it be sought? Confusion and realization, as they are both in oneself, if one arouses the citta, then one reaches it. Vidya and avidya, ^(luminosity & ignorance) as they are not in another, if one combines sraddha and practise, quickly it is realized. How pathetic, how pathetic, long sleeping children! How painful, how pitiful, crazy drunken people! The crazed and drunken laugh at the not-drunken; the extremely asleep deride those who perceive. If only they would search out the medicine of the Physician King, at some time they would see the rays of Maha Vairocana. When it comes to the shadowing barriers' degrees of light and heavy and realization's coming later or sooner, these depend on the root characteristics being different and the nature's desires not being alike. So it follows that the two teachings⁴ divide tracks and hands are diversely placed in the golden lotus garden⁵; the five vehicles⁶ line up their horse bits and buck with their hooves against the fence of illusion and form. In accordance with what the various poisons require to cure them, one takes the medicines, hence they differ. The device of the kind father leading his children, its basis is in this fact.

1 Prajna Bodhisattva, Wisdom as a female Bodhisattva in the Garbhadhatu.

2 One of the Buddha's names.

3 The Buddha would not allow anyone to explain the secret principle, but did so himself.

4 The Vajradhatu and Garbhadhatu of the Shingon school.

5 Term for these two dhatus.

6 The human, Gods, Sramana, Pratyeka Buddhas, Bodhisattvas.

7 dharani : one of the 4 kinds of mantra.

What is called the Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra is the Maha Prajna Bodhisattva's maha citta dharani samadi dharma gate. The words fill one sheet of paper, the number of lines is 14. One may say of it that very plainly it puts down the essentials, and it is simple but deep. The five storehouses¹ full of prajna are contained in one phrase that never wears out, the seven schools' fruits of practises that are drunk down in one line are never exhausted.² Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva in fact combines all the practitioners of all the vehicles. "Cross dukha to Nirvana" then embodies the joys obtained from all the teachings. "The five skandhas" horizontally point to the confusion realm, the "three Buddhas" vertically indicate the enlightened citta. When it says "color void", then Samantabhadra loosens his chin to the round and full principle;³ in discussing the "not born", then Manjusri with the perception that ends folly breaks into a laugh.⁴ If one explains this in the vijñana realm, you make the hands of choicely holding clap together.⁵ If one dissolves this into the massive wisdom, then you make glad the heart of returning to the one.⁶ The 12 nidanas stick birth and destruction on the unicorn's horns,⁷ the four noble truths' dharma wheel give dukha and sunya^(void) a scare on the goat's cart.⁸ How much the more so the two syllables "ga-te"-- they drink up all the treasure houses of the fruits of practises. The two words "para-sam" contain within them the dharma teaching of both the open and the secret. Each one of the sounds even in successive kalpas of continuous discourse cannot be exhausted; each word's actuality even countless Buddhas cannot reach the end of.

Because of this, if one recites, holds, discourses and reveres them, thereupon one gets free from dukha^(pain, suffering) and attains sukha^(liberation, bliss). If one practises and thinks about them, then one obtains the road and makes arise the complete grasp of everything. These very deep words are what in truth should be considered excellent.

¹ The sutras, precepts of conduct, explanations, dharani and prajna.

² Kegon (Avatamsaka), the Three Sastras (Madhyamika--Madhyamaka Sastra on the Mean, Dvadasanikaya-sastra on the 12 Points, Sata-sastra, the 100 Verses), Hosō sect (Dharma laksana school), Tendai (based on the Lotus Sutra and Prajna Paramita), Sravaka (school of Buddha's disciples), Pratyeka Buddhas (enlightenment for the self only), and Shingon (Mantrayana).

³ When the Tathagata explained the round and full of "color void" Samantabhadra smiled with rejoicing. He is the Avatamsaka dharma gate's lord.

⁴ When the Tathagata explained the 8 incorrect perceptions, Manjusri cut off all folly and obtained the unobtainable correct perception and laughed with joy. He is the lord of the Three Sastras' dharma gate.

⁵ When the Tathagata explained the 10,000 dharma just the vijñana (mind), Maitreya rejoiced and clapped his hands.

⁶ Returning to the one: principles and prajna are not 2, meeting 3 return to one.

⁷ The 12 nidanas are the Pratyeka Buddhas' continuous turning, unicorn's horns = Pratyeka Buddha, who practises alone.

⁸ Goat's cart = sravaka vehicle.

As a part of teaching youths I will take the essentials in detail and explain them in five parts. Though the people who have explained this sutra are many, still, not yet have its profound depths been fished in. The difference between translations, the distinctions between the open and secret schools-- all of these are explained in what follows. Somebody asked this question: "The prajna is the not completed second teaching. How can it contain the three open sutras?" When a Tathagata teaches the dharma, each word contains the meanings of the five vehicles and each concept explains the dharmas of the whole Tripitika. How much the more, one section or one chapter. What would there be lacking, what would there be that wouldn't be there? The tortoise diagrams and reed stalks contain the myriad manifestations, and so they cannot be exhausted. Indra's Records and Commentaries contain all principles and cannot be exhausted.

An objector said: "If that is so, then how is it that the previous dharma teachers didn't come out with these words?" I answer: when the sages give medicine, they give it according to the depth or lightness of the condition. The speaking or keeping silent of sage ones waits for the time and for the person. I ~~do not know~~ ^{yet} ~~do not know~~. However, should one not say what should be said? If it is difficult to put into words, should one not say it? The blame for saying what is difficult to say, let the wise person ~~determine~~ ^{determine}, that's all.

The Explanation:

What is called "The Buddha Discourses the Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra" has two parts to the title, because there are the Sanskrit and the Chinese parts. Now, when they say "The Buddha Discourses the Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra", Indian and Chinese are mixed up. The three words, "discourse", "Hridaya" and "sutra" are put in Chinese words. The rest of the nine words are Indian words. If the whole thing were in Sanskrit, it would be said, Buddhābhasa mahaprajñāparamita hṛda sūtram. The first two syllables (Buddha) are the name of the round and complete realization. The next two syllables (bhasa) mean to realize the opening up of the secret treasure house and cause the distribution of amrita (nectar). The next two syllables (maha) mean great, abundant, victorious. The next two (prajna) are the name of the dhyana wisdom. The next four (paramita) make a word that relates to what is done by full adroitness. The next two (hṛda) show the meaning, what is at the core of something. The next two (sūtram) reveal a word that signifies the cord that goes through the center, and that everything depends on.

If one explains the whole meaning, all are in terms of people and dharma comparisons; this is the name of the Maha Prajna Paramita Bodhisattva, for this is she as a person. This Bodhisattva is complete with the dharma mandala dharani samadhi gate. Each one of the words, thus, has a dharma, and each then using the shallow names of the world, reveals the deep name of the dharma nature. This is a parallel or comparison. When the Buddha was at the Vulture Peak, he explained graciously this samadhi gate for the sake of the Youth of the Cormorant family (Sariputra).

There are a number of translations of this sutra. First, there is the translation of Kumarajiva's Tripitika.¹ The text explained here is this one. Next, the translation of Tang's Hengaku Tripitika², in which title the four characters "Buddha Discourses Maha" do not exist. After "five skandhas" there is "and so forth" added. After "far separated", the word "all" is left out. After the dharani the efficacy is left out. Next, the book of the great Chou Dynasty's Gijo Tripitika³ in which title the word "Maha" is left out, and after the mantra the efficacy is put back in. Further, in the translation made by Hogetsu and Prajna's Tripitika⁴, there are prefaces and explanations added.

The open and the secret of the Hridaya.

In the third volume of the Collected Dharani Sutras, this mantra dharma is explained. The sutra's title is the same as in Kumarajiva's. When it says "Prajna Hridaya", it means that this Bodhisattva has both body and citta dharanis. This sutra's mantra is then the great citta dharani. From this citta dharani comes the name "Prajna Hridaya". Some say it is called "hridaya" because it abbreviates the essentials of the Maha Prajna Sutra, that this is not a distinct sutra by itself, etc. But to speak that way is like having snake scales on a dragon.

This sutra has five complete parts. First is the part "The Human Dharma Completely Gone Through". This is from "Avalokitesvara" down to "crossed every grief and danger". Second is the part "Distinguishing Various Vehicles". This is from "color is not different from empty" down to "since there is nothing to attain". Third is the part "Practitioner Obtains Benefit". This is from "Bodhisattvas" down to Samyaksambodhi.⁵ Fourth is the part "Everything Returns and Holds Vidya (luminosity)". This is from "Thus know, the prajna" down to "really and truly genuine, not empty". Fifth is the part "Secret Treasure House Mantra", and this is from "ga-te ga-te" down to "svaha".

1 Kumarajiva: Indian monk, 344-413, who came to China in 401.

2 Hengaku: Chinese monk, 600-664, who went to India and brought back many sutras and translated them.

3 Gijo: Chinese monk, 635-713, who went to India seeking the Preceptoral writings, secret sutras and Vijnapati theoretical books.

4 Hogetsu: person of east India who came to China in 732; Prajna: person of north India who entered China in 782 and was still alive when Kukai went to China to study. They became close colleagues.

5 Anuttara Samyaksambodhi - Perfect universal enlightenment, knowledge, understanding.

The first part, "Human Dharma completely gone through" is five-fold: Cause, Practise, Realization, Entering, Time. By "Avalokitesvara (Perceive Svabhava)" it means a person able to practise. That is to say, this person makes his causal factor the basic realization's bodhi. "Deep prajna" is the dharma capableness perceives; this then is Practise. "Luminously empty" is the wisdom that is able to prove and realize. "Crossed every grief" is the fruit obtained; the fruit is the Entering. Through this teaching, people's wisdom becomes unlimited, and it is on account of differences in wisdom that Times are many. Three lives, three kalpas, 60, a 100 various sorts of blind grasping-- these are spoken of as Time. To say it in a gatha,

The Perceiving One (Avalokitesvara) practised prajna,
Deeply made luminous the five skandha as empty.
He who for successive kalpas practised the mind-instant
Separated from the klesas, pierced through to the one citta.

The second part, "Distinguishing Various Vehicles", again is five-fold: Constructing, Cutting Off, Laksana, Two, One. In the first, what is called Constructing is the samadhi gateway of constructing Tathagatas. That is, from "color is no different from empty" to "again are like this". Constructing Tathagatas is the secret name of Samantabhadra. Samantabhadra's round cause, by holding the three dharmas¹ of round and smooth, makes a school. Hence he is given this name. Further, his is the body of the vow that all Tathagatas' bodhi cittas practise. To say it in a gatha,

Color and void (empty) from the beginning not two,
Activities and principles in origin the same.
Beyond doubt the three seeds are smooth²
Gold and water may be compared to those schools.³

The second, Cutting Off, means the no-folly-discourse Tathagata's samadhi gate. This is from where it says "all dharma have the empty laksana" to "not increasing, not diminishing". The no-folly-discourse Tathagata is Manjusri Bodhisattva's secret name. Manjusri's sharp sword well brandishes the eight "nots"⁴ and cuts off the blind, grasping citta. Because of this he is named. To say it in a gatha,

1 Activities & principles without obstacles, principles' principle without obstacles, and activities' activity without obstacles.

2 The three dharmas in note one.

4 The eight "nots" : not born, not destroyed, not permanent, not cut off, not one, not different, not coming, not going.

3 Gold and water : Gold is manjusri's color, and he rides on a golden haired lion. water often is used in explaining there being no "two", as waves and water are inseparable. Taken together as "golden water", as it is possible in Chinese, this term would then mean wisdom.

The eight "nots" cut off all folly,
Manjusri is this person.
Solitary, empty, the ultimate principle;
meaning and use most deep and real.

Third, called Laksana, means the samadhi gateway of Mahabaitara Bodhi-sattva. (Maha-Maitreya). This is from "the midst of empty there is mu-color" down to "mu thought realm". The Maha-karuna (great compassionate) samadhi by means of delight makes this school. Revealing cause and effect, it makes up sila (precepts). The distinctions between the laksana and the nature are set forth, the vijnapati-matra (mind-only) realm is pierced through to. The citta is just this. Put into a gatha,

The two atmans (I's)-- when will they be cut off?
In three great kalpas¹ will one realize the dharma body;
The alaya² is consciousness' nature
Illusion and shadow are only names.

Fourth is the two, that is, just the skandha with no ego, and ridding of actions and causal seeds³. These are the two vehicles' samadhi gate. From "no avidya (non-luminosity)" down to "no exhausting of old age and death" is meant. This represents the samadhi of the sravaka and pratyeka buddhas.

In wind and leaves know the cause and effect;
The sangsara (cycle of rebirths) in how many years realized.
Dew and flowers make one block off the seeds,
Goat and deer names together go.

"No amassing of pain or extinguishing road" -- this one phrase in five words is the samadhi of depending on words and obtaining the road. To say it in a gatha,

Among white bones, where is the I?
In blue pus⁴ from the beginning there was never a person.
My guru is the four mind-instants⁵,
As for arhats, what do they rejoice at?

1 kalpa: period of time that marks the rise, duration and end of every universe. Each great kalpa consists of 80 small kalpas (represented each as 16,800,000 years). A maha kalpa is 1,334,000,000 years.

2 Alaya-vijnana, another name of the storehouse or source of consciousness from which both subject and object are derived. 10

3 The two vehicles, the sravaka and pratyeka buddha ranks, compared to goat and deer carts. These two principles are what they base themselves on.

4 of the 9 laksanas of human beings, white bones is no. 1, blue pus no 2.

5 The body (being impure), receiving (sensations, which causes pain), the mind (or heart, which is ever changing), dharma (ego-lessness). Perceiving these one separates from the ideas of pure, pleasure, ~~permanence~~ permanence, and self. Another stage of attainment in the Hinayana school. As it, like the sravakas and pratyeka buddhas, represents only a partial enlightenment, Kukai does not think they warrant joy.

Fifth, what is called the One, is the samadhi gateway of Arya Barotikei Bodhisattva. From "no wisdom" down to "since there is nothing to attain" is this. This obtaining-svabhava pure Tathagata, by means of the one road pure wondrous lotus without stain, unfolds it to sentient beings and takes away their pain and danger. Wisdom lifts up ability and competence. Attaining is the name given to what one can prove. Now if one brings together knowledge and wisdom, then with sudden power one is with the One. The Dharma Flower (Lotus Sutra) and the Nirvana teachings that go to the outermost extremity and return to the root, all their teachings are contained just in these ten words. The various vehicles' distinctions are what the wise should investigate. In a gatha to say it,

Perceive the lotus and know self purity,

See the fruits and realize the citta's powers.

If in the one road the accomplishments are brought together,

The three carriages thereupon return to silence.¹

The Third Part, "The Practitioner obtains benefit" is two-fold, people and dharma. In the first, there are seven types of people, six preliminary and one subsequent.² According to the differences of the vehicles there are differences in sattvas (states of births), and for this reason again, there are four sattvas: foolish, knowing, golden and wise. Next, in Dharma there also are four. that is to say, Causing, Practising, Realizing, Entering. Prajna is the well-Causing and well-Practising. Being without doubts and separated from obstacles is Entering Nirvana. The well-comprehending Realization knowledge is the fruit of Realization. Just as it says

1 The 3 carriages, the 3 vehicles of the goat, deer and ox, i.e. the sramana, pratyekka Buddha and Bodhisattva.

2 Avatamsaka, Abhidhamma, Hosō, Sramana, Pratyeka Buddha, and Tendai. The one subsequent is the Mantrayana, Shingon.

in the text it should be understood. To say it in a gatha:

The practising people in number are seven,
Twice two,¹ these are the dharma;
Round and forlorn² and the Bodhi
Correct and accordant, what is deficient?

The fourth part, "Everything Returns and is a holder of Vidya", is three-fold... Name, Form and Use. The four bija dharanis give Name, "really and truly genuine, not empty" points to Form. "Can prevent all dukha" shows Use. When it gives the Name, the beginning, "is a great celestial dharani" is the sravaka's mantra. Second is the Pratyekka's mantra, third is the Mahayana mantra, Fourth is the secret treasure house mantra. If one obtains the entire meaning, one would say that in each of the four mantras there are complete all the four names. Abbreviating, it shows one corner. The round-knowing person, let him return the three to the one. In a gatha to say it:

The all-holding² has the letters, the principles
The ksanti, the mantra, all completely bright;
Sound and word, people and dharma

And the real laksana all have this name (The all-holding).

The fifth part, "Secret Treasure House Mantra" is five-fold. First, "gate" shows the fruit of the sravaka's practise. Second, the second "gate" gives the fruit of the Pratyekka Buddha's practise. Third, "para-gate" points to the fruit of the supreme practise of all the Mahayana. Fourth, "para-samgate" shows the fruit of practise of mantra and mandala together, complete and round. Fifth, "Bodhisvaha" tells the meaning of all the above-mentioned

¹ Two times two or four: Causing, Practising, Realizing, Entering. The first two make up Cause, the 2nd, Effect.

² This means the dharani, which has contained in each letter infinite teachings.

vehicles thoroughly completed and Bodhi's realization entered into.

The meanings of the parts are like this. If the words' laksanas are combined with the meanings and explained, there are unlimited human dharma meanings. Many kalpas may pass but they would be difficult to exhaust. If people want to learn of this, they should ask relying on dharma. In a gatha to say it,

Mantra is inconceivable,
If you repeat and perceive, avidya is blocked.
One word contains a thousand principles,
In this body you realize the dharma thusness.
Proceed and proceed to the round and forlorn,
Go and go to enter the original beginning.
The three worlds like an inn,
The one citta is the original dwelling.

Someone asked: The dharanis are a Tathagata's secret words, thus the monks of old (founders of the Avatamsaka, Hosō schools) all closed their mouths and stopped their brushes. Now, for you to write this explanation goes against the sage intentions. I answer: Among the Tathagata's explanations there are two kinds-- one is the open, the second is the secret. On behalf of the open types he said so many words and sentences, for the sake of those with the root for the secret, he discoursed the dharani words. For this reason the Tathagata of his own accord deigned to speak of the letters A, Om, and the meanings of the various bijas. It was on behalf of those with the understanding for the secret principle that he discussed these. Ryuumoo, Mui, Kooti and others also discussed these meanings. The space between able and not, is where teaching lies; to explain this, to be quiet about this, and then it would be in accordance with the Buddha's mind.

Someone asked: The two teachings, open and secret, are vast and remote in objectives. Now in the midst of this open sutra to explain the secret meaning would be improper, wouldn't it?

I answered: To the eyes of a Physician King everything that touches the road is medicine. A person who can refine treasures sees rough ore as treasure. The knower and not knower-- which one is wrong?

Again, this Prajna Bodhisattva's mantra, principle and perception dharma were explained by the Buddha in the sutra, "The Vajra Ushnisha". This sutra is the most secret among secrets. The manifested Sakyamuni, when in the Jetavana, for the sake of Bodhisattvas, Gods and men, discoursed on paintings, statues, altars, dharmas, mantras and mudras. And this also is secret. The third volume of the "Collected Dharani Sutras" is this. Open and secret are in people, but voice and letters (of sutras) are not so. Still, the secret is in the midst of the open, and in the midst of the secret is the extremely secret. Of shallow and deeper, more and more, that's all.

I on the basis of the secret mantra's meaning

Briefly described the Hridaya Sutra's five-fold text.

Each word, each sentence, penetrates the dharma dhatu,

No end, no beginning, they are my citta's parts.

Weak-eyed sentient beings, blind, don't see,

Manjusri and Prajna Bodhisattva well free them from confusion.

They moisten with sweet dew and wet the confused,

Cut off avidya and destroy demon armies.

(End)

POSTSCRIPT

At the time of Koonin, 9th year (778) Spring, there was a great epidemic in the world. On this occasion, the Emperor himself dipped the tip of his brush in gold ink and taking purple paper, deigned to make a copy of the Prajna Hridaya Sutra. I, following the model of collections of discourses, composed an exposition of the sutra's meaning. Before the words were all spit out of this pledged undertaking, brought-back-to-life people had come out onto the roads. The night changing, sunbeams shone red. This was not due to any power of this foolish person's strictness of practise. It was the golden wheel's august sraddha power that did it. Anyhow, companions who make journeys to sacred buildings ought to condescend to learn to repeat this secret key. Long ago, I on Gridhakuta (Grdhrakuta)¹ Mountain, placed my mat where the dharma was discoursed, and while there heard this deep composition. How could it be that its meaning would not be valid?

The Monk Going to China, Kukai

1 Vulture Peak, mt. near Rajagṛha, said to be in the shape of a Vulture's head, or to be inhabited by vultures. Its caves are inhabited by ascetics. Ananda was hindered there by Piśuṇa (Mara). It is where The Buddha discoursed The Lotus Sutra.